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ABSTRACT

In order to help in the analysis and evaluation of organizations, this paper presents a model that combines a functional perspective with a rules approach. An organization is viewed as an entity analogous to a culture that can be analyzed by identifying its collectively defined master contract; it may be critiqued by assessing the process by which the contract is communicated to its members. The organization and its members can be evaluated according to the members' competence in aligning themselves to the contract and in coordinating their activities to the constitutive and regulative rules of the organization. A case study involving interviews, questionnaires, and statistical analysis of data suggests that this approach is useful to communication theorists and consultants. Assessing the competencies of members is important because optimally competent members may be located; they are most able to accurately evaluate the corporate image and contribute creative innovations. The consultant using the procedure can disseminate otherwise implicit information to all the organization's members, thus enabling them to act on information usually obtainable only by optimally competent members. Graphs, tables, and references are included. (DF)

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A Rules-Based Model for the Analysis and Evaluation of Organizational Communication

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Organizational communication has emerged as a major focus for communication research and consulting. However, the concepts of "organization" and "organizing" have not become comparably prominent ancestral terms in empirically grounded theories of communication. Part of the reason for this imbalance is the conceptualization of organizational communication: the "container perspective" focusses researchers' attention on everything but the organization per se, and the "functional perspective" has produced no research program. In a recent review of the literature, Hawes (1974) noted that most treatments of organizational communication view the organization as "a performance container in which behavior takes place." This view leads to an analysis of the restraints or communication imposed by the internal structures such as "channels" and costs, or on the dyadic and group processes within the container. This contrasts sharply with the perspective of Weik (1969) and Haas and Drabek (1973) and Hawes (1974) that "communication behavior does not occur within a network of relationships but rather is that network."

The container perspective is clearly exemplified by Huseman, Lahiff and Hatfield (1976). Their attention is to intrapersonal processes, particularly perception: the organization per se does not figure as a prominent concept except as these intrapersonal dynamics affect some feature of the organization. Goldhaber (1974) straddles these perspectives: his functional analysis of the organization does not permeate his description of communication at the dyadic level, in which he abandons an open systems conceptualization of structural variables which impose constraints on components in favor of a neo-Freudian transactive analysis. The most influential book in the functionalist perspective has been Thayer's Communication and Communication Systems (1968). Thayer focuses on the process of organizing as an inherent part of his definition of communication. Communication is identified as the process by which organizations transform sense/data into information and use that information to relate its components to one another. The functionalist perspective is highly provocative; it suggests that the organization and communication cannot be understood in isolation and that an analysis of

communication processes is an important entry-point in the study of particular organizations. However, Thayer provided no logic or calculus for research, and at times seemed to imply that there is no way to develop one, and as a result no empirically grounded body of literature has developed. Without such a literature, this perspective is unable to describe the procedures by which organizations take account of internal and external forces (Cronen and Davis, in press).

This paper presents a protocol for the analysis and study of organizations from the functionalist perspective, reports a case study of a common organization, and derives implications both for theory and for consultants. This protocol requires the development of a set of constructs for analyzing organizations, including those of the the master contract, coordination and coorientation as configurations of perceptions of the organization, and a conceptualization of competence.

We view the organization as a culture, which includes a definition of the collective "we" and a structuring of knowledge into procedures for knowing and acting (Goodenough, 1971). As a culture, organization self-definition consists of particular constructs used for giving meaning to the collectivity and particular beliefs and goals which define who "we" are: this is the organizational image. Elaborated into constitutive and regulative rules, the image organizes ways of knowing and acting which guide the enactment of communicative episodes in the organization. The totality of these rules, when shared, constitute the organizational "master contract" (Carson, 1969). Individuals within an organization may not know or accept the master contract: an important aspect of organizational analysis consists of determining how individuals and organizations perform when such conflicts occur.

Figure 1

The elements of this model will be elaborated in the succeeding sections of this paper.

AN ANALYTIC MODEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Organizations are dynamic, shared, social constructions. They are dynamic because the image of the collective "we" is open to elaboration and reorganization like any construction of social reality (Kelly, 1955). The organizational image is shared, but only imperfectly. Perfect understanding between two individuals is unlikely because social experience affects perception (Crockett, 1965), because of the preverbal nature of some constructs (Delia and Swanson, 1976), and because of the ineffability of some aspects of experience (Pearce and Branham, 1977).

We assume that individuals construe the meaning of the collectivity in a way roughly equivalent to Kelly's (1955) account of personal constructs. According to Kelly, personal constructs are means by which people determine how two phenomena are like one another and different from a third. In Kelly's words they function as "transparent templets" through which order and meaning are given to the world. For example, one organization member may order his perceptions of academic departments along the constructs as "professional-immature" while others in the organization think in terms of a "theory-based-practical" distinction. In Kelly's system these constructs may differ in number and degree of integration. They are also hierarchically arranged so that higher order constructs do not simply group and label, but also contextualize the meaning of subordinate constructs. The integrative links between higher order and lower order constructs are constitutive rules which specify that, for example, electronic productions count as (are contextualized by) the "professional" pole of the "professional-immature" construct.[1]

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1. The reader should be aware, however, of two departures from Kelly's original approach. First, following the work of Bieri et Al (1966) we treat constructs as continua and not simply as dichotomies. Second, we agree with Mischel's (1964) argument views concerning the functioning of constructs: individuals use personal constructs to develop goals.

The organizational image is thus composed of a set of continua which members share as a way of making sense of the organizational "we".

Individuals form beliefs about the organization which are simply the positions assigned to the organization on crucial constructs. For example, two employees both use the construct "slick----cheap" but one believes the organization to be extremely "cheap" and the other thinks it moderately "slick". Consistent with Mischel (1964) we assume that individuals use their construct systems to identify goal states--or ideals for organizations. Thus an individual may perceive the organization as moderately "slick" but consider its ideal state to be "extremely slick."

In our discussion of organizational image we have identified three levels of analysis (1) the constructs used to define the organization; (2) beliefs about the organization and (3) ideal goal states for the organization. The relationship among these levels of analysis is such that sufficient consensus on the level of constructs is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for consensus at the levels of beliefs and ideals. When members use radically different constructs they are assigning meaning to reality in radically different ways.

Organizational Images and Its Relationship to Rules

The image and master contract are presumed to have developed out of on-going interpersonal episodes. When two or more individuals meet they bring to their initial episode unique orientations (construed beliefs) as to what constitutes a satisfying interpersonal encounter. As they begin to coordinate the meanings each has assigned to the topics of conversation, these orientations begin to blend together at certain points. Simultaneously, individuals contribute their own style or tactics for managing the conversation. Each must adapt his style to those of the other participants. Thus a master contract is initiated and begins to develop into a coorientation of beliefs, constructs, and styles which define their organization's own identity. As the goals expand to include those for maintaining an on-going relationship, rules are implicitily and/or explicitly

negotiated for the attainment of these goals.

After the master contract is initially constructed it will provide the context for the conduct of future episodes. As Hall (1977) and others conducting research on nonverbal behavior (Scheflen, 1974) have established, the contexts in which behaviors occur determine the meaning of those behaviors. Coorientation and coordination is successfully achieved to the extent that the system's meanings are accurately perceived, negotiated, and agreed upon. Therefore, it is the system's image of itself and the resulting coorientation and coordination of its meanings for the members' behaviors that is crucial in understanding and evaluating the system.

Once individuals have come together and have negotiated a set of rules, others may join the relationship, internalizing the organization's preexisting rules by no-trial learning (Bandura, 1965) and by trial and error (Miller, Galanter and Primbram, 1960). New members of the collectivity may attempt to infer the full set of rules that link behaviors to the master contract (or to less abstract organizational goals). At other times they may simply internalize the proper antecedent conditions and speech acts, constructing their rules with virtual functional autonomy (Allport, 1937). In doing so the consequent brought by the rule is merely a vague construction such as "doing what's expected." More competent organization members will construct rules utilizing explicit understanding of how behaviors count in light of their relationship to a coworker, group or larger collectivity. New members may also participate in the renegotiation of rules and the alteration of beliefs and goals.

Following conventional usage (Searle, 1969) we identify two kinds of rules which integrate specific beliefs and behaviors with the organizational image: constitutive rules and regulative rules.

Constitutive Rules. Constitutive rules link beliefs to one another and link behaviors to beliefs. They indicate how one belief may "count-as" another superordinate belief. For example in one small organization we studied (Massachusetts Mill), face-to-face talk counted as "personal" concern while memo writing counted as "cold". However, in that organization neither being cold nor personal seemed connected to the constructs members said defined the organization.

Other beliefs, may however be closely tied to the organizational image. To illustrate, consider the observations of O'Brien (1978) concerning an organization which likes to project an image of itself as "efficient". In the frequently enacted episode of assignment-giving the subordinate is expected to simply affirm that he or she will carry out the assignment and leave without further comment. Employees who complain about the difficulties of the assignment have performed a behavioral sequence which counts as "inefficient". Responding to the assignment in the brief appropriate way counts as "efficiency". In an academic setting if we give a research assignment and the assistant reviews briefly the theoretical and methodological problems, their behavior probably counts as "scholarliness".

Regulative Rules. Regulative rules are developed by individuals to guide their actions and bring about outcomes. They provide the latitude of acceptable behavior within a given episode. The kinds of behaviors we are concerned about in this paper are speech acts (both verbal and nonverbal). Speech acts may be patterned into episodes--sequences of reciprocated speech acts (Pearce, 1976). Episodes subsume constitutive rules which specify how behaviors "count" in a specific episode. For example, in an episode of assignment giving telling a joke may count as "extreme impudence" while telling the same joke in a social episode counts as "moderate sociability".

We assume that individuals construct regulative rules using their personal constructs, beliefs, and intentions (Pearce, Cronen and Conklin, 1977). To construct regulative rules, organization members must engage in role-taking. They must reconstruct how speech acts or episodes are related to meaningful constructions of other organization members. Assume that an aware member knows that at his organization the construct "obedient-uppity" is a crucial part of the organizational image. This hypothetical employee also knows certain constitutive rules. He knows that slightly to extremely "uppity-ness" counts as grounds for dismissal. He also knows that at committee meetings certain speech acts "count-as" uppity in varying degrees: "giving opinions", "disagreeing with the boss", etc., while other

speech acts such as "agreeing with the boss", "asking questions", etc. count as more obedient. He may construe some of these "obedient" acts as legitimate and others as obligatory. He may perform the legitimate acts. For those acts he perceives as obligatory he sees no alternative. The "uppity" acts are prohibited. Certain acts are simply irrelevant to the problem of not appearing uppity and thus keeping his job, such as smoking or smiling. These prohibitions, legitimations, and obligations are enforced so long as the employee is in the appropriate episode (committee meeting) and seeks a goal state (being viewed as obedient and thus retained).

Latitudes of Behavior Choice and Organizational Functioning. In the previous example we stated a rule which did not legitimize one but several speech acts and in which more than one act was prohibited. All rules are not identical in the latitudes of obligation, legitimation, irrelevance, and prohibition specified. The assessment of the size of these latitudes is an important organizational variable. In some areas the desirable situation might be to narrow the range of legitimate performances. In the study reported below, the organization legitimated an unduly wide range of hostile behaviors, making planned change virtually impossible. In other cases the range of legitimate behaviors may be unduly restricted. Organizations such as IBM with narrow latitudes for proper dress or the military with wide latitudes of obligation are very likely to identify performances which disconfirm individual's self-concept while affirming the organizational image. Such individuals may very likely choose to participate in other organizations that do not cause such conflict. A wider range of organizationally legitimate behaviors allows a greater probability that the individual can find behaviors which are legitimate for both self and organization. The existence of a range of indifferent behaviors is important because it allows for creativity. These initially indifferent behaviors may later be assimilated into the legitimized or prohibited range. Without such a range of indifference innovation would either have to be overly rapid -- through immediate legitimation -- or rejected.

Following the structure proposed by Cronen and Pearce (1978),

a regulative rule should contain four elements: (1) Construction of conditions antecedent to action; (2) A deontic operator; (3) Identification of a construed speech act(s) or episode(s); and (4) Construction of intended consequences of the speech act(s). Symbolically:

$$rR = \left[\text{Antecedents} \supset (\text{Deontic Operator (Speech Act)})_{1\ldots n}\right] \supset \text{Consequents}$$

Where rR = Regulative Rule

Antecedents = Construed set of conditions including preceding speech acts.

Deontic Operator = The operators of deontic logic which are "obligatory," "legitimate," "irrelevant," and "prohibited."

Speech Act = Verbal or nonverbal message message, e.g., praise, blame, inform, argue, etc.

Consequents = Construed outcome or set of outcomes contingent upon performance

$\supset$ = Read as "if...then."

Practical Force. Organizations are generative mechanisms (Harre, 1974) in the sense that the existence of a group sharing a master contract permits the accomplishment of patterned interpersonal behaviors. To the extent that persons agree on constitutive and regulative rules, it is possible for individuals to initiate lines of action with reasonable expectation of accomplishing purposes which require conjoint action. Practical force (Cushman and Pearce, 1976) describes the "necessity" for particular behaviors to occur in various contexts as defined by the rules. Practical force is both a constraint on behavior -- one must follow the rules at least most of the time if he is to remain part of the organization -- and a guide -- the existence of practical force enables sophisticated patterns of behavior.

The strength of practical force varies directly as a function of the consensus on rules and the intensity with which they are held (Jackson, 1975). If there is no agreement and/or if the rules describe all behavior as permitted or irrelevant, practical force is low: a person cannot expect others to follow his lead and cannot anticipate how they will interpret his actions.

The organization, of course, is not the only generative mechanism affecting its members. The self (Cushman and Craig, 1976), external organizations, superordinate entities (the state; profession) and subordinate organizations (other persons; situated events) generate practical forces as well which potentially conflict with those of the organization. The problem the organization faces is that of keeping certain key episodes or acts under control of the practical force of its own image, or the practical force of some other generative mechanism which compliments its overall goals.

Logical Force. Logical force is produced by the interpenetration of the rule sets of two or more people. The acts produced under the guidance of one rule may become the antecedent condition of another rule, and so on. The patterns produced by these chains are governed by logical force and can -- depending on the content of the rules -- lead to some unexpected behaviors, some of which are catastrophic and some greatly prized.

Because logical force results from the combination of rule sets, the patterns produced seem beyond the power of the individuals to control. Consider what is likely to occur when Bob and Fred, who do not share the same regulative rules, enact an episode in which Fred asks for Bob's opinion:

Bob employs $rule_1$:

	Antecedent Condition		Deontic Operators/ Speech Act			Intended Consequences
rR_1 = [	(when asked for opinion)	⊃	(obligatory:	(give full lecture and cite your qualifications))	⊃	(other will know you are competent and will accept information)]

Fred replies, based on:

rR_2 = [	(being lectured to)	⊃	(obligatory:	(point out your own qualifications))	⊃	(avoid one down position)]

Bob responds:

rR_3 = [	(other seems to be egotistical)	⊃	(obligatory:	(give him ego support for personal character))	⊃	(be considered a friend)]

Fred:

	Antecedent Condition		Deontic Operators/ Speech Act		Intended Consequences
rR_4= [	(other shows personal interest in you)	⊃	(obligatory:	(self disclose))]	⊃ (develop closer relationship

Bob:

rR_5= [	(other gets personal)	⊃	(obligatory:	(switch to humorous episode))]	⊃ (avoid vulnerability)

Both Bob and Fred may feel frustrated by this conversation, and each may blame the other as a poor conversationalist. In fact, the result is logically necessary (Cushman and Pearce, 1976) given the juxtaposition of these particular rules.

Logical force and practical force do not constitute sufficient explanation of organizational control. Complete accounting of an organization would require the description of those things which are in its power (since what Cushman and Pearce, 1976, describe as nomic necessity places law-like limits on the functioning of the organization and its members), plus a measure of logical and practical forces. Explanations of particular occurrences involve a description of the confluences of these forces within the bounds of nomic necessity.

AN EVALUATIONAL MODEL OF ORGANIZATIONAL COMMUNICATION

Assuming that some states of organizational functioning are preferable to others (a safe enough assumption according to an informal sample of involuntarily retired executives), it is important both for theoretical and consulting purposes to evaluate particular processes. Two evaluative foci are the configuration of perceptions of the collective organizational image--coorientation--and movements within the organization to affirm that image--coordination. Two individual competencies are directly related to these criteria: strategic and tactical competence, each of which may be possessed in varying degrees.

The discussion of these organizational criteria and of individual competencies is a necessary fiction. Each depends on an interaction between the organizational image and the capacity of its members.

If the organization has dysfunctional logical force or inadequate practical force, the competency of talented individuals is to little avail, and without talented members, the organization is crippled.

Coorientation and Strategic Competence

Coorientation is a place-marker for descriptions of the extent to which members of an organization accurately comprehend the image. The master contract and its constitutive rules in particular must be accurately perceived and agreed upon by all its members in order to maintain the reality that has been created by the organization as a whole. Coorientation, all things being equal, is achieved by the exercise of individuals' strategic competence, defined by Thayer (1968) as "...an individual's ability veridically (accurately) to perceive or intuit or comprehend the state-relationship between himself and some aspect of his environment (e.g., between himself and other(s) whom he wishes to communicate-to or by whom he wishes to be communicated-with)".

The extent of agreement on the master contract limits the potential for coorientation at the individual level. Without significant concensus a member does not know how his or her behaviors "count" in the perceptions of others. Even worse, the individual may know that his or her behaviors have radically different meaning for various other organization members. This problem may be acute in affirmative action hiring when there is no clear agreement on whether a female's behavior counts as career oriented (positively valued) or unfeminine (negatively valued). There may also be disagreement among male supervisors as to whether "career orientation" or "femininity" are related to organizational self-concept.

Coordination and Tactical Competence

Coordination refers to the extent to which members organize their knowledge of constitutive rules and the organizations' abstract self-definition into regulative rules. Of course, the construction of successful regulative rules requires knowledge of a dependable stable set of shared meanings (constitutive rules) in the organization.

Special attention must be given to the interaction of coorientation and coordination. Not only is coorientation a prerequisite for coordination, coordination must be seen as including procedures

which facilitate coorientation. Organizations must function with regulative rules that generate episodes in which members become informed about the assignment of meaning as well as modes of behavior within the organization.

Levels of Competence

Three levels of competence can be distinguished for both coorientation and coordination: minimal, satisfactory and optimal. Minimally competent members have a knowledge of only those constitutive rules necessary for the day to day performance of their current job assignment. The mail room clerk knows that a bright smile counts as good fellowship to his fellow workers. He may not, however, see how good fellowship counts in light of the organizational image, or if it is related at all. Lacking knowledge of how the hierarchical organization of constructs and beliefs contextualizes the meanings of certain behaviors, the minimally competent communicator does not know what actions will impress superiors because they "show he has potential". The constitutive rules he constructs are likely to be internalized by nc-trial learning (Bandura, 1965) so that the minimally competent individual is the inheritor of preexisting rules but is not participating in the negotiation of new constitutive rules.

Satisfactory competence denotes a person who is system dependent: he seeks out the rules of the organization and internalizes them as his own. Where a minimally competent member would know to do X in situation Y, the satisfactorily competent member knows how this rule fits into the master contract. On this basis, he may participate in the negotiation of new rules consistent with the master contract, but would not participate in revolutionary developments whether through ignorance (as might a minimally competent member) or through design (as might an optimally competent member). For the satisfactorily competent member, the goals of the organization become his: this makes him an ideal employee for short-term goals but does not necessarily equip him for institutional leadership or for meeting his personal needs.

Simon (1976) has refered to this type of competence as satis-

ficing. A satisficer, according to Simon engages in a course of action that is good enough to meet a set of requirements rather than maximizing his strategy by seeking to understand the complexity of the decision. A typical decision rule used by a satisfactorily competent individual may be referred to as a "criterion of consensus" (George, 1974) which reflects what most others in the organization would do under similar circumstances. Organization theorists assume that individuals use a satisficing strategy in personal decisions as well as in organization decisions (Etzioni, 1967; Miller and Stair, 1967; Young, 1966). These individuals accurately perceive enough of the complexity of the system's organization of knowledge to make adequate short term decisions. The most readily available information that he is satisfied with using is usually the information that the organization is most willing to dispence. They are not however skilled at seeking and using the information necessary for obtaining long term benefits for the individual. That information is usually not a part of daily organizational chatter. And when it is on the agenda it is not stated explicitly.

Optimal competence denotes the ability not only to know the rules of the organization in perspective of the master contract, but to perceive alternatives to those rules and assess the likely consequences of each. The perceived alternatives may stem from the other generative mechanisms impinging upon him or from his differentiation of his own and others' perceptions. Recognizing these alternatives increases his latitude of action, including his ability to contrast and critique situated behaviors and to respond creatively. Further, he is able to detect contradictions or ambiguities in the organizational rule structures, and is sensitive to multiple meanings of behavior, such as the simultaneous but often different "content" and "relational" messages (Watzlawick, et al., 1967; Wish, et al., 1976).

Types of Competence and Levels of Competence

These three levels of competence apply both to tactical and strategic competence, but are not necessarily symmetrical. A person may be optimally strategically competent in that he knows exactly what is wrong with an organization but may be only minimally tactically

competent in that all he can do is to keep on keeping on. Further, competence is episode-dependent: a person may be optimally strategically competent in that he knows all the constitutive rules for football but minimally strategically competent on a date.

CASE STUDY

This conceptualization of organizational communication is informed by a study of an organization conducted by the authors in fall, 1976. The answers to these questions provide information useful to the theorist and consultant: (1) What is the nature of and extent of consensus on the organizational image? (2) What is the extent of coorientation on the actual state of the organization? (3) What is the extent of coorientation on the ideal state of the organization? (4) What are the latitudes of legitimate behaviors which facilitate coordinated movement to affirm the organizational image?

The study was conducted in one of the social science departments in the five college system in the Amherst, Massachusetts, area. A department was chosen that involved both humanistic and scientific scholars like many communication departments. Ten members of that department, or one-half the total membership, participated in a two-stage interview and questionaire procedure. The interviews generate data about the organizational self-image; the questionaire permitted assessment of the latitudes of permitted and prohibited behavior.

Operationalizing Variables

The Organizational Image: Nature and Consensus. It is impossible for members to "see-to" (Ganz, 1971) the fit between their behavior and the master contract if there is insufficient consensus on the image of the organization. In the interviews, subjects were asked these questions to determine the constructs which they use to define their organization:

1. What, in your opinion, makes your department unique among other departments like it?
2. In what ways is it similar to other departments?
3. As a department, what are you like at your very best?
4. As a department, what are you like at your very worst?

The interviewer recorded answers in the form of one pole of a construct.

After recording the response the interviewer repeated what was written and then asked for the opposite of the defining quality recorded in order to obtain the whole construct (Bannister and Mair, 1968). For example if an interviewee said "we have our own unique academic subject matter, not like some other departments", the interviewer recorded "has own unique subject matter". The interviewer checked this inscription with the interviewee and then asked "what is the opposite of having your own unique subject matter?" to which the respondant replied, "Teaching service courses." Each interview lasted 30-45 minutes.

Categories of functionally equivalent constructs (elicitations differing slightly in verbal labeling but not in function) were established by employing two judges who were graduate students in the department being studied. The two judges organized 75% of all 116 elicited constructs under ten categories by means of card sorts, with 70-80% agreement. Judges then placed unclassifiable constructs into files representing new categories. Neither judge could group more than two remaining constructs together and there was little agreement on which could be paired. Thus we concluded that the remaining constructs were highly idiosyncratic and not socially shared. The ten categories which represented functionally equivalent constructs were reworded as six different constructs so worded as to embrace the differing verbal labels for the construct poles (see Table 1).[2] In the questionnaire, participants indicated how important each construct was for defining the organization using a scale of from 1 (extremely important) to 10 (extremely unimportant).

The Coorientation Variables: Actual and Ideal States. Each of the ten constructs was converted to a 9-space scale bounded by the polar adjectives. For example, one scale was:

powerful ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ powerless

Subjects made four judgments on each scale, following these instructions:

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2. This procedure suffices to identify some of those constructs central to the organizational image, which is sufficient for our purposes. It does not produce a description of the boundaries of the image.

1. Indicate the space that represents what you personally believe is the ideal for the organization.
2. Indicate the space that represents what most others think is the ideal for the organization.
3. Indicate the space that represents what you personally think is the actual status of the organization.
4. Indicate the space that represents what others think is the actual status of the organization.

Coordination: Latitude of Legitimate Behaviors. To supply the deontic operators for the rules, it was necessary to determine how behaviors along each construct are perceived. Adapting standard social judgment procedures, the 10 constructs were again presented as 9-space scales and subjects were instructed to assume that each scale represented a range of behaviors. The respondants marked spaces they envisioned as representing ranges of legitimized behavior with the symbol (L) and spaces representing ranges of rejected behavior with the symbol (R). Results were tabulated to provide three kinds of information: (1) The $\bar{x}$ latitude of rejection, (2) The position of the legitimate range on each construct, (3) The $\bar{x}$ size of residual (unmarked range). The unmarked range we presume to represent behaviors that are ambiguous--not clearly legitimate or rejected by the regulatory rules of the organization. The results for four illustrative constructs which represent central features of the image are presented in Tables 2-5.

Results

There was considerable agreement on the importance of the ten constructs derived by content analysis. No faculty member rated any scale below 5 (moderate importance). The relatively low standard deviations indicate that there was general consensus on the relative importance of the constructs we derived to represent the organizational self-image (See Table 1).

We will confine our report of the results of our coorientation measures to four illustrative constructs: scientific--historical/critical, community of scholars--backbiting/fragmented, powerful--powerless, service oriented--substance oriented. These were selected because of their high importance ratings and their intrinsic interest

for members of communications departments. For each scaled construct Wilcoxon T tests were computed to make four comparisons: own perceptions of the ideal vs others' perceptions of ideal, own perceptions of actual status vs others' perceptions of actual status, own perception of actual status vs others' perceptions of the ideal, and own perception of the ideal vs others' perceptions of actual status (Results are summarized in Tables 2-5).

On the "scientific--historical/critical" scale there were significant differences between what members thought their coworkers percieved as the actual and ideal states of the organization ($T=4$, $p<.05$), and a significant difference between what members say is the ideal state and what they think their coworkers would say is the ideal state ($T=3$, $p<.05$). Members themselves believe that the organization actually is where they ideally would like it to be (See Table 2).

On the community of "scholars--backbiting/fragmented" scale there was a significant difference between what members thought to be the actual and ideal states of the organization ($T=0$, $p<.05$), and between what members thought their coworkers perceived as actual and ideal states. Other comparisons were non significant (See Table 3).

On the "powerful--powerless" scale three significant differences emerged. There was a significant difference between what members thought their coworkers perceived as the actual as opposed to the ideal state of the organization ($T=5$, $p<.05$), and between what members themselves reported as the actual and ideal states ($T=0$, $p<.05$). Finally a significant difference was found between what members report as the actual state and what they think coworkers perceive as the actual state ($T=3$, $p<.05$). (See Table 4).

The last scale to be reported is the "service--substance" scale. Only one significant difference emerged between what members report as the actual state of the organization and what they think their coworkers hold as the ideal ($T=4$, $p<.05$). The difference between what members report as ideal and what they think coworkers hold as ideal approaches statistical significance at the .1 level ($T=4.5$). Other differences were not significant (See Table 5).

All four scales show relatively wide ranges of legitimate behavior (See Tables 6-9). Prohibitions seem to extend to extreme "historical/critical", extreme "back-biting", extreme "service" orientation and extreme "powerless" orientations. The "powerful--powerless" scale exhibits larger residual latitudes in the middle ranges of behavior than other scales.

Discussion

This study demonstrates the viability of the functionalist protocol developed here: relevant empirical information may be acquired and its analysis has considerable heuristic value for understanding particular organizations. In this organization, there is sufficient agreement on the image to permit further co-orientation and coordination. Members generally agree on the constructs used to define the department. However, the coorientation measures suggest some important problems of interest to a researcher or consultant.

The coorientational state on the "scientific--historical/critical" construct creates a self-perpetuating misconception (See Tables 2 and 6). The members do not accurately perceive the reality they have created. In fact, the department has created two conflicting images, one which they agree on but are unaware of the agreement, and another in which they disagree and are aware of it. Specifically, members believe that their organization is at the place it should ideally be (at the midpoint of the continuum) but unaware of this agreement. Instead, they inaccurately perceive the ideal state of their colleagues as significantly different from that point (at the scientific end of the continuum). Members also think that others see the actual state at the opposite end (historical/critical).

This configuration of constitutive rules produces a set of regulative rules which lead to self-perpetuating misperception. For example, a young faculty member desiring tenure may follow the rule:

ANTECEDENT		OPERATOR and SPEECH ACT		CONSEQUENT
[Department desires a scientific image	⊃	{(Legitimate (Emphasize scientific work)) (Prohibited (emphasize historical/critical work))	] ⊃	Be a positively regarded as a potential senior faculty member.

The feedback from behavior resulting from this rule is likely to confirm it. Members of the tenure review committe who are minimally competent (who imitate others' behavior) or satisfactorily competent (who are system dependent) will give him positive reinforcement, thus strengthening the rule. Optimal competent reviewers (who can see the discrepancy between their own positions on this construct and the consensual position) will give him negative feedback, which -- unless accompanied by direct metacommunication -- probably will intensify the rule by making him more fastideous in avoiding historical/critical allusions. Similarly, optimally competent members who suggest research programs or courses which might combine the two poles of this construct would probably be perceived as naive and idealistic by the non-optimally competent members of the department. Assuming that the latter can muster the requisite votes to defeat any such proposal, these misperceptions can perpetuate themselves indefinitely.

The results for the "community of scholars--backbiting/fragmented" construct presents a very different picture (See Tables 3 and 7). Here there is no coorientation problem. Organization members know what others believe to be the actual and ideal states. The problem is a coordination one which requires tactical competence to bring the system from one state of affairs to the other. Members concur that it is ideal to maintain a community of scholars image. There is also agreement that to be a backbiting, fragmented group is the least desirable image for the system. They have not, however, developed regulative rules that prohibit any but the most extreme forms of infighting.

Members perceive that organizational rules legitimate an excessively wide range of behaviors given the nature of the construct for which there is little ambiguity. The system will probably not be able to move toward its ideal of more harmonious and mutually supportive conduct unless there is a consensus on altering the regulative rules which clearly permit destructive behavior. Significantly, fully one third of the respondants see no limits on permissable behavior at all. Herein lies the problem: members can legitimally initiate and participate in episodes which reflect backbiting/

fragmented group, and most perceive the group as backbiting/fragmented. As a result: (1) ambiguous behavior -- for example, a sincere attempt to bring the faculty together around a shared activity such as a colloquim -- will likely be interpreted as only an elaborate or novel way to bite backs; (2) tactical competence is precluded because there is no practical force -- since anything goes, no one can effectuate cooperative movement to new episodes; and (3) forms of behavior occur which make the definition of the department as backbiting a self-fulfilling prophecy.

These constitutive rules produce a set of regulative rules such as these:

	Antecedent Condition		Deontic Operator	Speech Act			Intention
rR_1 = [	disagreement	⊃	{ (legitimate:	(insult))	]	⊃	(avoid losing face)
			{ (legitimate:	(take one-up position))			
rR_2 = [	insulted	⊃	{ (legitimate:	(return insult)	]	⊃	(avoid losing face)
			{ (legitimate:	(take one-up position))			

Behavior guided by these rules is dominated by logical force and quickly results in threats of personal violence or professional denunciation which, when witnessed by others, confirms the organizational image.

Both coorientation and coordination problems are evident when we examine beliefs derived from the "politically powerful--powerless" construct. This construct, more than others, allows for perceptions and interactions between the members of the system and its external environment to define the organization's self image. In this case members have convinced themselves through previous encounters with superordinant monitering systems (college administration) that: (1) they have very little political power within the university, and (2) most members don't realize how powerless they really are (See Tables 4 and 8).

One effect of allowing external agents to define the image of this organization if that there is a great deal of ambiguity as to the latitude of acceptable behavior. While the latitude of rejection

is small, the residual is the highest of the four sample scales, perhaps reflecting a lack of clarity for the relative rules. In other words, the external organization defines what counts as powerful but does not provide the tactics or practical force for achieving a powerful state.

A problem arises when a member attempts to assume the responsibility of increasing the political power of the department. In order to do so he must find an area in which members can legitimately define themselves such as high class enrollments. The regulative rules from which he operates may be written:

	Antecedent Condition (perception of image)		Deontic Operators	Speech Acts		Intention
rR_1 = [	(department is powerless)	⊃	(legitimate:	(call higher enrollments to attention of administration))	] ⊃	(raise power base for department)
rR_2 = [	(meeting between administrator and department member has occured)	⊃	(legitimate:	(announce attempt to increase power base in faculty meeting),	] ⊃	(to encourage members of potential for power)

A conflicting regulative rule from which other department members operate may be written:

	Antecedent Condition		Deontic Operators	Speech Act		Intention
rR_1 = [	(department member announces encounter with administration concerning power base)	⊃	{ (legitimate:	(ignore announcement))	] ⊃	(avoid frustration) (discourage further action)
			{ (legitimate:	(denounce attempt as uninteresting or irrelevant))		

In this situation where almost any behavior is legitimate but few behaviors count as perpetuating the ideals, there is little support for those who try to move the department closer to its ideal state of political power. It seems apparent that it will be most difficult to convince the majority of department members that high class enrollments or any other contribution to the university can increase their base of political power.

Members agree that the ideal position is at the mid-point on the

service--substance construct (See Tables 5 and 9). That is also where they perceive themselves to be. Each member however thinks that he is not in agreement with the rest of the department on this issue. He believes that the other faculty members would prefer more emphasis on substance (theory). The results of such inaccuracy leads members to mix service with substance but to do it unabtrusively or privately. This of course adds to the feeling of fragmentation since members don't think it appropriate to ask others to join them in service projects. For example regulative rules may exist which reflect misperceptions of the members:

	Antecedent Condition		Deontic Operators:	Speech Acts		Intentions
rR_1 =	(organizational members prefer theoretical orientation)	⊃	(legitimate:	(discuss latest journal articles))	⊃	(to reinforce perceived image)
rR_2 =	(continuing education department presents plan to faculty for improving teaching)	⊃	(legitimate:	(criticize continuing education for wasting department's time))	⊃	(to reinforce theoretical image)
			(legitimate:	(disregard advice by defining program as unsophisticated))		(to discourage service orientation)

A paradoxical situation has developed within the department. While it is considered ideal to participate in as many service as substance oriented episodes, members engaging openly in an unusually obvious service project will be perceived as misrepresenting the master contract of the department. Therefore, any project such as one to improve the teaching skills of the faculty will be construed as inappropriate. In short, any move to encourage more service projects is a service project itself and will be discouraged by the membership.

Conclusion

This paper juxtaposed a functional perspective and a rules-based approach to the study of formal organizations. The resulting data support the position that organizations can be understood in light of

the creation and maintenance of their own self-image and the ability of their members to accurately perceive and to agree upon that image. An understanding of the former allows for an identification of the problematic constitutive and regulative rules; the later allows for a critique of individual members' communication competence.

One value in assessing the competencies of members is that optimally competent members may be located within the organization. These members are most able to accurately evaluate the image and contribute creative innovations when the master contract will allow for such changes. Although identifying and utilizing optimally competent members already withing the organization is ideal, this research paradigm suggests a unique role for the outside consultant. Using the research procedure outlined above he is in a position to diffuse otherwise implicit information to all the organization members. Thus, many members can act upon information usually obtainable by optimally competent members.

A consultant acting as a temporary optimally competent member should be able to identify the organizational image and analyze the process by which it is elaborated into constitutive and regulative rules. The specific questions that the consultant attempts to answer are these:

Coorientation.

1. What constructs are used to define the image of the collectivity?
   - 1.1. What is the extent of consensus on the use of these constructs?
   - 1.2. What is the extent of consensus at various levels and divisions of the organization?
2. What do organization members believe to be the actual and ideal state of the collectivity?
   - 2.1. What is the extent of consensus on beliefs and goals?
   - 2.2. What is the extent of consensus on beliefs and goals at various levels and divisions of the organization?
3. What are the constitutive rules that indicate how various behaviors count in terms of the organizational image?
   - 3.1. What is the extent of consensus on constitutive rules?
   - 3.2. What is the extent of consensus on these rules at the various levels and divisions of the organization?
4. What other master contracts outside or within the organization function as competive generative mechanisms?

Coordination.

5. What are the regulative rules that guide interpersonal communication within the organization?

   5.1. What is the extent of consensus on regulative rules?

   5.1. What is the extent of consensus on regulative rules at various levels and divisions of the organization?

6. Do the regulative rules of key individuals create repeated undesireable patterns of behavior brought on by the logical force of the conjoined rule sets?

7. Do individuals' regulative rules tend to be functionally autonomous or do they account for the multiple outcomes of speech behaviors?

   7.1. Are the intended consequents of regulative rules constructed with a view to both content and relationship aspects of communication?

   7.2. Does the structure of rules generate unpredictable, unpatterned interactions?

8. What are the latitudes of obligatory, legitimate, irrelevant, and/or prohibited behaviors associated with regulatory rules?

   8.1. Do these latitude widths facilitate creative change?

   8.2. Do these latitudes facilitate or obstruct reaching organizational goals?

9. Does the organization legitimate episodes in which members can learn regulative and constitutive rules?

10. Who can be identified as minimally, satisfactorily, and optimally competent members?

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The Master Contract

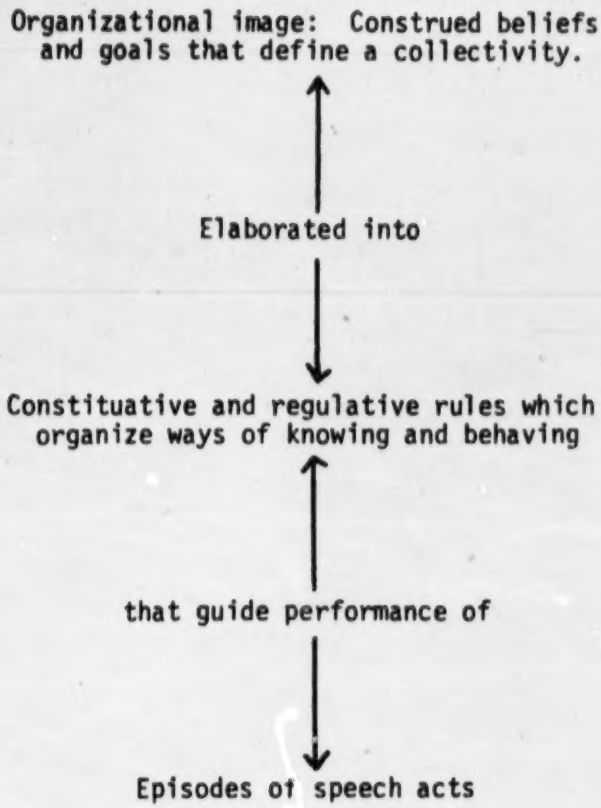

Organizational image: Construed beliefs and goals that define a collectivity.
Elaborated into
Constituative and regulative rules which organize ways of knowing and behaving
that guide performance of
Episodes of speech acts

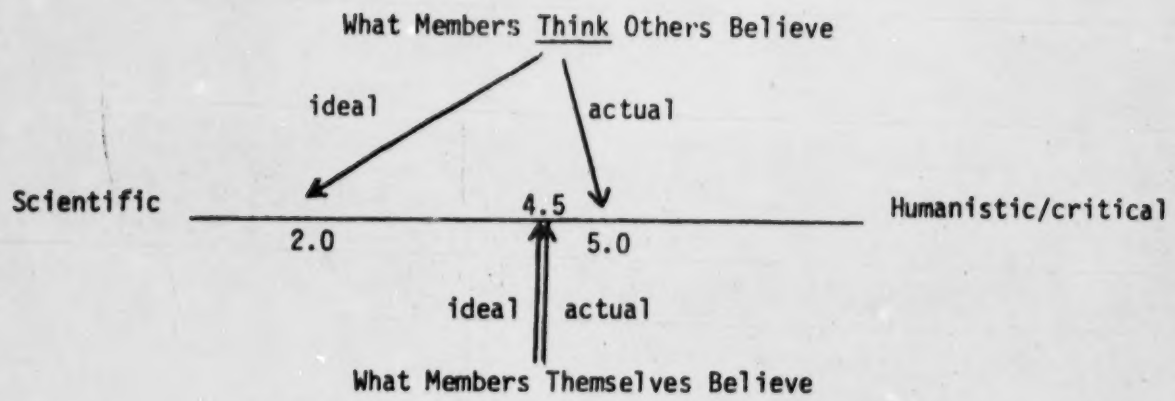
Figure 1

Table 1

Ten Constructs Representing Functionally Equivalent Categories

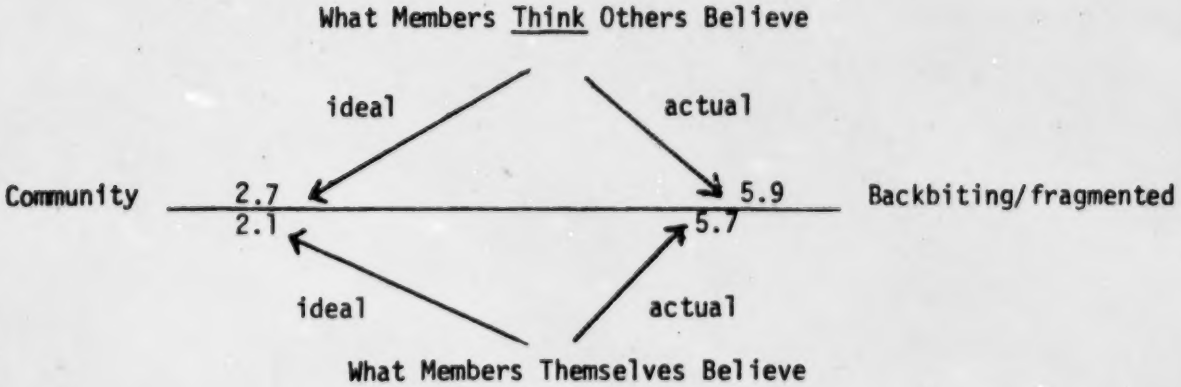
	SD	$\bar{x}$	rank
Mediocre work allowed - rejected	.69	4.40	8.5
Ambiguity of purpose - agreement on purpose	.94	3.70	5.0
Theoretically sophisticated research - theoretically unsophisticated, not research oriented	1.39	3.80	6.0
Service to the rest of the university - has substance and academic merit of its own	1.34	3.40	2.5
Scientific orientation - historical/critical orientation	1.10	2.00	1.0
Diverse, bright faculty - "deadwood"	.69	4.40	8.5
Community of mutually supportive scholars - backbiting, fragmented	1.03	4.20	7.0
Politically powerful in the university - powerless	1.07	3.40	2.5
Capable leadership with high aspirations - inept, short sighted leadership	.52	4.50	10.0
Comradery between faculty and graduate students - little time with students outside of class	1.06	3.45	4.0

Table 2



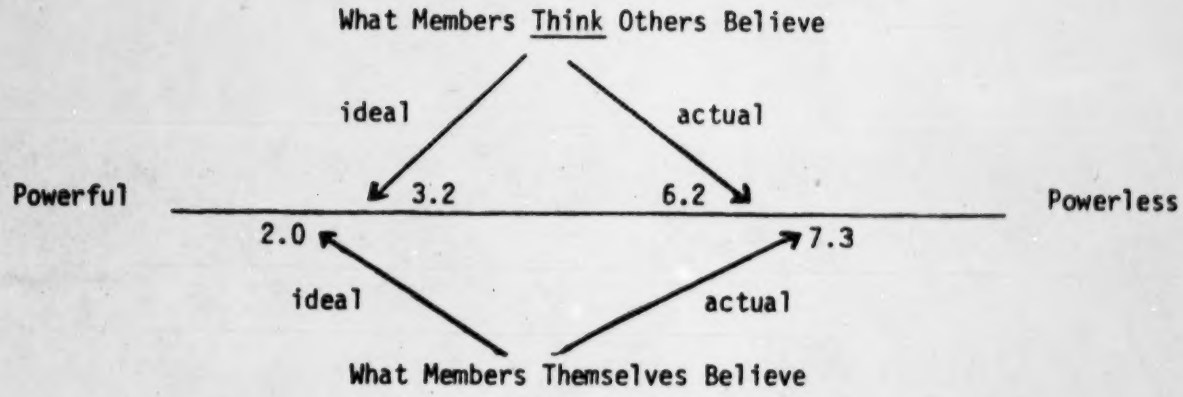
Ideal for others vs. actual for others	T = 4	$p < .05$
Ideal for selves vs. actual for selves		n.s.
Ideal for selves vs. ideal for others	T = 3	$p < .05$
Actual for selves vs. actual for others		n.s.

Table 3



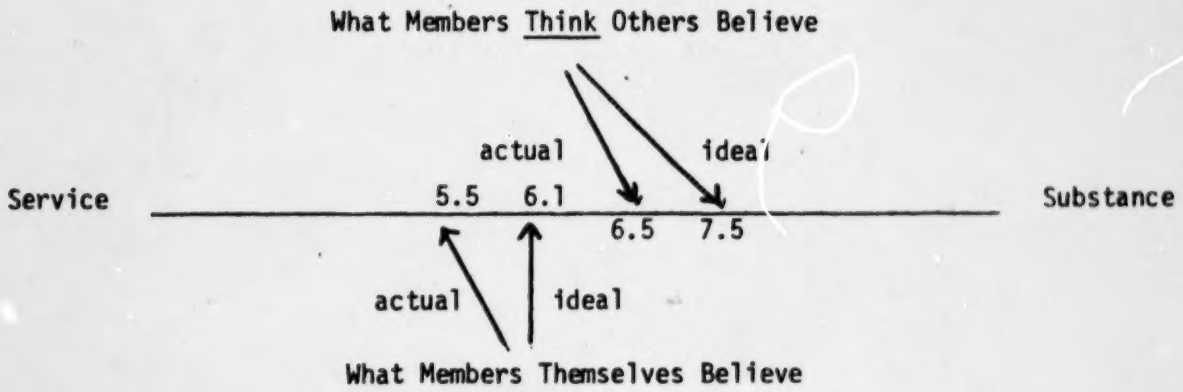
Ideal for others vs. actual for others	T = 0	$p < .05$
Ideal for selves vs. actual for selves	T = 0	$p < .05$
Ideal for selves vs. ideal for others		n.s.
Actual for selves vs. actual for others		n.s.

Table 4



Ideal for others vs. actual for others	T = 5	$p < .05$
ideal for selves vs. actual for selves	T = 0	$p < .05$
ideal for selves vs. ideal for others		n.s.
Actual for selves vs. actual for others	T = 3	$p < .05$

Table 5



Ideal for others vs. actual for others		n.s.
Ideal for selves vs. actual for selves		n.s.
Ideal for selves vs. ideal for others	T = 4.5	$p < .1$
Actual for selves vs. ideal for others	T = 4	$p < .05$

Table 6

	science		residual
prohibitions		legitimations	
30%	1	70%	0
10%	2	80%	10%
	3	100%	0
	4	100%	0
	5	100%	0
	6	100%	0
	7	100%	0
20%	8	70%	10%
50%	9	40%	10%

historical/critical

Table 7

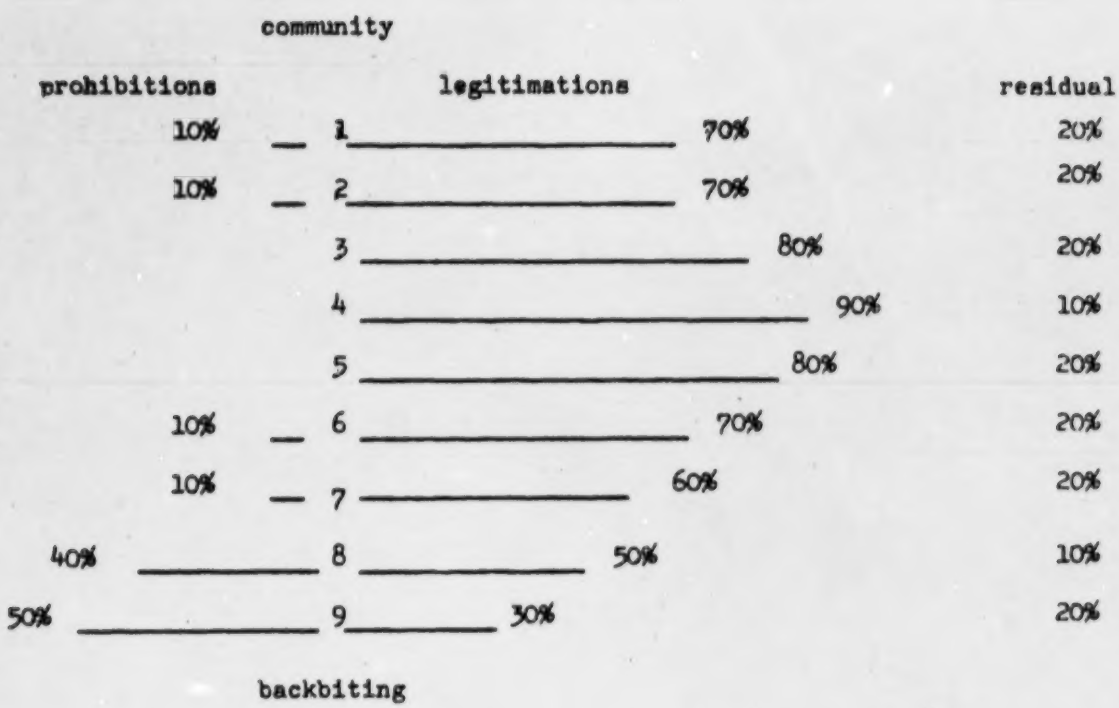
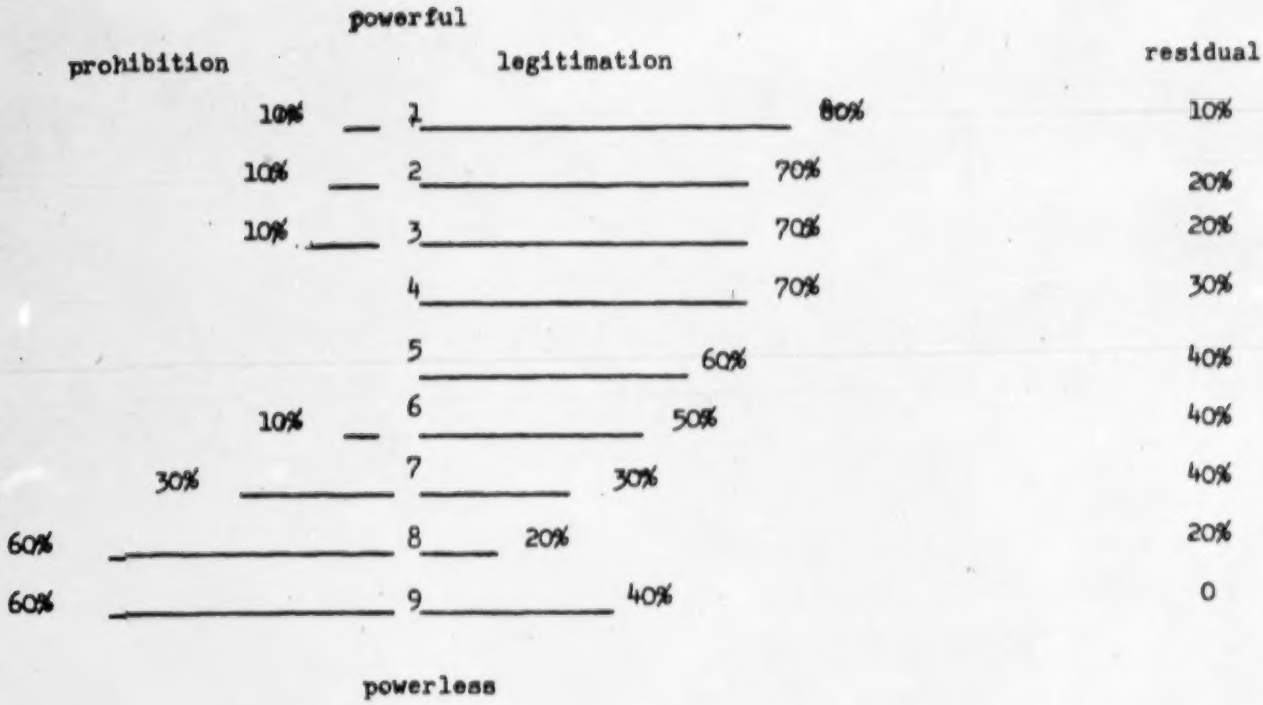

community
prohibitions
legitimations
residual
10%
1
70%
20%
10%
2
70%
20%
3
80%
20%
4
90%
10%
5
80%
20%
10%
6
70%
20%
10%
7
60%
20%
40%
8
50%
10%
50%
9
30%
20%
backbiting

Table 8

service	prohibitions	legitimations	residual
1	50%	40%	10%
2	30%	60%	10%
3	10%	70%	20%
4		80%	20%
5		80%	20%
6		80%	80%
7		80%	80%
8		100%	0
9		100%	0

substance

Table 9


powerful
prohibition
legitimation
residual
10%
1
80%
10%
10%
2
70%
20%
10%
3
70%
20%
4
70%
30%
5
60%
40%
10%
6
50%
40%
30%
7
30%
40%
60%
8
20%
20%
60%
9
40%
0
powerless